

CALSAN CPR STATEMENT

TO MEMBERS OF THE CALIFORNIA PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMISSION:

My name is John T. Kehoe, Chairman, Policy Council of the California Senior Action Network, or Cal SAN. CALSAN is a bipartisan network of people 50+ who believe there is a need for activists who are centrist in their political point-of-view. We believe that unless the voices of reason take back the political debate, our state will be driven by the selfish agendas of the extremists of the two major parties. Like Governor Schwarzenegger, we believe that educating our children, caring for our aging citizens, and sustaining a vibrant business community that creates jobs, as well as generating taxes, are not contradictory goals. Founded in this past year we are committed to supporting policies that strengthen our economy as well as our communities.

I also bring the experience of more than three decades as serving as a Senior Adjunct Professor for Golden Gate University of San Francisco, and decades of service in public policy roles for the State of California, including Director of the State and Consumer Services Agency under Governor Ronald Reagan and as the Executive Director of the California Commission on Aging under Governors Wilson and Davis.

My comments today are intended to both commend the work of the CPR and to challenge it to more fully embrace its mission to *"give customers of state government a voice, and a choice, make access easier for Californians, focus on the what the customer needs, not what the government needs, and work with local government"* **especially in the area of programs and services for the aging.**

When I was interviewed for the position by the Appointments Secretary to then Governor Pete Wilson, I asked if the Commission on Aging was truly necessary, since Governor Wilson, like our current Governor was very interested in reducing the number of boards and commissions in State Government. I learned that indeed it was necessary. In fact it was mandated by the Older Americans Act. If California was to receive its \$115,000,000 plus Federal dollars it would have to have the Commission.

In 1999, the Federal government eliminated the requirement for a Commission in order to qualify for Federal funds. The only need now is for a State planning unit on aging. So now, once again, I invite the question, is the Commission on Aging truly necessary? I say, no and I believe you will agree with me in just a few minutes.

The funding process for the Commission is based on discretionary dollars from the Older Americans Act, around \$700,000 in the current budget. These dollars could be better spent on service-related programs. There are no direct General Fund dollars supporting the Commission per se and the Commission never has been able to achieve a level of alternative funding, even though a series of Governors have suggested that.

I also challenge this body to do further examination - and elimination of the silos - evident in the delivery of programs and services for the aging. I am concerned that there is a disconnect amongst and between these programs, and with the needs and interests of those they are intended to serve.

California is the most populous state in the Union. Currently 14% of our population is over age 65. It does not take much imagination to realize that by the time the well-monitored demographic force known as "baby boomers" reach this age, this percentage will significantly change. In just 25 years, by the year 2030,

there will be as many people over age 65 as under 65. It is imperative that we have an effective, and accessible, management system in place.

The "aging network" we have today is failing miserably on at least two levels. It fails to serve the needs of those for whom the programs and services are intended. And it fails to influence the national policy agenda on aging.

To "focus on what the customer needs," reorganization of programs and services for the aging must start with setting up an administrative structure which organizes the various silo-ed operations into a single entity. I believe this should be called the Department for Adult and Aging Services.

This new Department should encompass all activities under the Older American's Act and the Older Californian's Act, as well as Independent Living Centers. The new Department for Aging and Adult Services should also include the older workers programs currently silo-ed at the Employment Development Department, funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act.

The Department for Aging and Adult Services will then serve as the administrative entity for elderly nutrition programs, adult social services, information services, case management, the stipend volunteer programs, such as Senior Corps, RSVP programs, and Foster Grandparent Programs, health insurance counseling programs, elder abuse prevention programs, caregiver services, preventive health programs and the long term care ombudsman, Multi-purpose senior service programs, Linkages, Senior Companion, Brown Bag, in-home support services, Caregiver Resource Centers, Mental Health for Older Adults, Blind Services and Deaf Services, Drug and Alcohol Services and Preventive Healthcare for the Aging. These activities are currently scattered among fifteen agencies and Departments - each silo with its own bureaucracy and agenda.

Under a single management structure customers in need will actually be able to access these programs. As organized under the Older American Act, existing Area Agencies on Aging are the perfect existing network for building a bridge toward bringing these programs closer to local governments in conformity with the goals of CPR.

In this recommendation for reorganizing aging programs and services I have left out the services for developmentally disabled adults. Because of the entitlement nature of these programs I believe they are best served with a separate administrative structure. However, I believe there is tremendous opportunity for collaborative outreach and marketing with the proposed Department for Adult and Aging Services.

Again, the goal of this restructuring and reorganization is to create a system responsive to the needs of its customers with funding and services flowing to the person based on the assessment of need, not their savvy in dissecting what program is where.

I believe the Department for Adult and Aging Services should have the flexibility to convene advisory bodies to work with the top managers on project specific needs. These task-focused advisory teams will be called together to address an immediate opportunity and advisors selected based on their experience and activities. Unlike the Commission on Aging where Commissioners are selected based on their political connections and therefore serve a constituency of the past; advisors to the DAAS will serve a constituency of the present and their credentials will be the experience they bring as evidenced by the work in which they engage within the aging community.

These recommendations, I believe will create an administrative structure that is efficient, cost-effective and accessible to those who are in need of such services. But this reorganization is also an opportunity to strengthen the voice of

California in aging policy discussions at the national level. There are many advocacy organizations such as the one I am representing today, CALSAN. AARP, the Older Women's League, Gray Panthers, and others are powerful voices for aging individuals, programs and services. But there is no embracing entity that unites these activists with a strong voice at the national level.

The Department for Adult and Aging Services would be well-positioned to serve this role and leverage the strength of this advocacy network into a united, and strong, voice. I am disheartened that the White House Conference on Aging has but one representative from California. The WHCOA is appointed to manage the decennial national conference on Aging issues. The next meeting is scheduled for October, 2005. California, with one of the largest aging populations in the country has just one representative on the policy committee preparing the agenda for this conference. This lack of presence is testament to the lack of focus, and lack of capacity, to drive policy that serves the needs and interests of the aging in California.

CALSAN shares with the Commission the desire to achieve the best management system possible for the twenty-first century challenges to California's aging population. I know that we can achieve a model which can effectively and efficiently become the envy for other State's to follow, versus being forgotten when it comes to planning the agenda for a once in ten year national Conference on Aging issues, as we have under the current system.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these views with you and I look forward to the opportunity to work with the Commission and the Administration in the implementation of policies such as these that will *"give customers of state government a voice, and a choice, making access easier."*